

CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

A Christian Journal of Opinion

Authority, Consent and Racial Justice

The Supreme Court has reaffirmed its original decision requiring equal educational opportunities for all races. However, this jockeying in the courts is one of the most dangerous turns in the devious course of recent events in the racial crisis of the South because it has shifted attention from the question of racial justice to the question of legal jurisdiction. In the heat of the battle joined between the defenders of "states' rights" and those advocating federal authority, the prior issue of the morality or immorality of continued segregation is almost hidden. It is not strange that it is on the hill of local sovereignty that the politicians have chosen to dig in and fight, for this looks like a most impregnable line of defense. All the emotional appeals to regional memories and the shabby ghosts of the Confederacy, and the horrors of having a foreign way imposed at "bayonet point" by Federal troops, enable the politician to mask prejudice in the guise of sacred virtue.

If the issue is joined only at the level of the rights and wrongs of federal versus state authority, however, it cannot be resolved for the Christian conscience, apart from the more important moral issue of racial justice. It will not do to say, for instance, that obedience to the Supreme Court, as the law of the land is a Christian imperative—no matter what. There have been many historic instances of civil disobedience to "the law of the land" in the name of a higher law. Indeed, there is no built-in guarantee that the decision of a higher court is morally more correct than one of a lower court simply by reason of its elevation. The real question is the *moral* substance of the decision of the court, whether in fact it is in accord with the Christian consensus and conscience. In this instance, the 1954 decision, after all the villification has been spilled on it, remains plain-

ly the expression of the Christian conscience, and deserves, on that ground, Christian consent.

Yet the problem of all law is again illustrated here. The authority of law rests on power and consent. This decision lacks the consent of the majority who will be under its arm. The popular resistance can be overcome, and consent turned from surly compliance to glad acceptance, only if the moral logic of the decision is popularly granted: that segregation is "inherently unequal" and denies citizens "the equal protection of the laws." The enactment of the law may curtail states' rights, but only in the interests of the extension of civil rights. In this immediate crisis, the power of law cannot wait until universal consent has been learned by the experience of integration. So it must drag along the recalcitrant and enforce civil rights, even at the peril of civil disturbance. Within such precarious circumstances—whether it be in Little Rock or in Norfolk—such citizens as are persuaded of the Christian justice of integration, even against their private likes, can redeem the times by the public support of measures of compliance and, thereby, create a new temper of obedience to the law from within.

There is some evidence that a new ground swell of sentiment against the political die-hards is on the increase. The image of a "solid South," in which massive resistance is grinding integration to a halt, is as pathetic as it is false. Integration in many areas of common life—transportation, public higher education, business—moves steadily ahead. On closer look, the "solid South" becomes a patchwork quilt of integration and segregation.

Between the politicians at the state level and the local school boards in crucial cities, a considerable divergence of opinion, if not a downright clash, is evident. In Norfolk, Arlington, and other

Virginia communities, the school boards are ready to comply, as was the Little Rock board a year ago. Charged with the immediate responsibility for the schooling of children, these boards are not at all happy about the postponements from the governors' offices. In this division there is some leverage which, if adroitly used, may partially resolve the impasse.

Actually the immediate choice facing the school boards in Virginia is likely to be between the disagreeable alternatives of closing the schools or opening them on a moderately integrated basis. Faced with these alternatives, the majority of parents and children would prefer the latter. As was put in one plaintive letter to the editor from a white Norfolk school girl, at the news of the postponement of Norfolk school openings: "Parents should not worry about whether their children will attend school with two or three Negroes, but whether they will get an education at all." When the real option for a school board becomes the choice between partially integrated education or no education, then the flimsy and self-defeating character of "massive resistance" laws will become apparent to all but the fanatic segregationists who will themselves encounter a wave of resentment.

One cannot but feel that in such a city as Norfolk, for example, where upwards of 10,000 civilian citizens work and eat at the naval bases daily in a fully integrated situation, there may be enough experience and sanity carried home to civilian life outside the gates to support the moderate steps taken to integrate the public schools.

One ray of hope for breakthrough lies in the possibility of a three-way conflict among federal, state and local forces. If state authorities can somehow be squeezed between the Supreme Court decision, on the one hand, and local pressure for keeping schools open, on the other, the "massive resistance" laws may be overturned.

When Southern communities *do* attempt a serious start on integration, even though only of a token sort and under the duress of law, as in Tennessee and North Carolina, it is not long before local pride appears on the other side of the moral fence, and the community begins to point with satisfaction to what is accomplished. This is another way in which consent for law takes root, and men learn to make a virtue out of necessity, and God maketh even the wrath of men to praise him.

W. B.

ANOTHER DISASTROUS POLICY

THE PRESIDENT'S address about the situation in the Formosa Straits was an implausible defense of a dangerously mistaken policy. His comparison of these islands to the various countries in Europe that were taken by the Nazis is far-fetched. It is unfortunate that he did not have a map at his back, for that would have refuted his statements.

These unhappy off-shore islands belong historically and geographically to the mainland of China. Their status is different from Formosa. They are being used as bases for attacks on the mainland and for annoyance to its shipping. It is reasonable for mainland China to seek to free its ports from such centers of hostile action. For the United States to insist that any change at all in the line that is defended is appeasement of a kind that threatens the remainder of the free world is not convincing.

To draw a line that can be defended, even though it may involve giving up some territory, should be an advantage to the free world. It is not only a matter of its being capable of being defended militarily; there should also be within the free world itself a general belief that there are good grounds for defending it. It is ironic that a President who is usually so cautious and speaks so often and so sincerely of peace should lend his support to so reckless a policy.

The defense of Formosa as a refuge for exiles and as a community that does not choose to be under Communist domination is quite another matter. Our own country would not be deeply divided over its defense and there would be wide support for such a policy in the free world if it were accompanied by the abandonment of the fiction that the Government of Formosa is the true government of China. There is much debate as to whether it is necessary to defend Formosa, not only to keep its inhabitants from falling under Communist rule, but as a military bastion of the free world. It may be better to neutralize it under the United Nations.

Slowly American opinion is changing in regard to the basic assumptions that underlie our present policy. Even the cautious Arthur Krock has called for leadership that would prepare the nation for a new policy. He did not, however, go as far as Walter Lippmann who regards our commitments

to Nationalist China as a long standing error. Sen. John Sherman Cooper, one of the senators who knows most about Asia, believes that we should allow Communist China to have the off-shore islands. Dean Acheson, Thomas Finletter and many Democrats in the Senate have denounced our policy.

Some of the most devastating criticism has come from James Reston. In a recent column in *The New York Times*, he wrote: "Is it reasonable to suppose that the United States can go on, without war, claiming the right under the Monroe Doctrine to keep the Communists out of the whole Western world, and at the same time insisting that Moscow should keep out of the Middle East and Peiping out of Quemoy?"

Soon there must be a change of policy. We must not abandon the Nationalists as people to the Communists, but we should accept Communist China as a reality that is not likely to be changed by our pressure. We hope that it will change after the first phase of fanaticism has run out, but it may long be more difficult to deal with China than with Russia. It will be advantageous to the free world to encourage differences between China and Russia, and this is more likely to happen when both nations are in the United Nations. This acceptance of Communist China as a reality that is not likely to be changed by our pressure will be difficult for the American people because they have been led to believe for so long that, if we back the Nationalists long enough and resolutely enough, Communist China will disappear.

The need of recognizing Communist China is the more evident as we move into discussions of nuclear inspection and disarmament that will require inspection stations on Chinese soil. The very negotiations which we have had with the Chinese ambassador in Switzerland and which have resumed in Warsaw point to the need of recognition.

It is to be hoped that these projected negotiations, which the President emphasized, will yield some result that rescues us from the present predicament, but it is difficult to avoid the fear that the Administration is so boxed-in, because of its previous commitments to the Nationalists, that it will have little with which to negotiate.

We often hear it said that, if we yield anything now, all our friends, especially those in Asia, will be distrustful of us. Actually, if we allow ourselves to be dragged into war by the Chinese nationalists and if, in the course of that war, we use nuclear weapons against the mainland of China, we would become the objects of far greater distrust around

the world and especially in Asia. We would split the free world with very few nations, except the Governments of South Korea and Formosa, on our side.

J. C. B.

FAITH AND "FREEDOM"

CHRISTIANS ARE always tempted to equate their faith with a particular form of government, economic system or social milieu. The so-called "German Christians" were able in the 30's to equate Hitler and the New Testament. During the McCarthy Era in this country anybody who did not equate Christianity with capitalism was in danger of being called a Communist. At present the identification is broader; the American way of life and the Christian way of life are apparently one and the same thing.

But a recent news release from *Christianity Today*, a conservative Protestant biweekly, suggested that it is "faith and free enterprise" that go hand in hand. "Free enterprise" is the defining category for reporting the results of a poll about the relationship of "economic and religious freedom." The release sadly reports that "barely more than one out of two U.S. Protestant ministers sees any connection" between the two. The question on which the poll was based, and which is described in the news release as dealing with "views on faith and free enterprise," was: "Economic and religious freedom are linked. If the Government owns and operates all industry, religious freedom will disappear. In the main do you agree or disagree?"

We object. This is a juggling with terms that borders on the irresponsible. It makes at least two illicit assumptions: (1) that the only alternative to situations where "the Government owns and operates *all* industry," (*italics added*) is "free enterprise," and (2) that "faith" can only be secure if it is wedded to a particular kind of economic orientation. It isn't very hard, in the light of the well-known position of the askers of the question, to guess which economic orientation is presupposed.

If *Christianity Today* is disturbed by the outcome of its survey, we, on the contrary, can derive a certain satisfaction from the fact that *almost* half of the ministers interviewed were unwilling to walk into the semantic trap prepared for them. They may not have had a ready alternative to propose, but at least they saw that what St. Paul meant when he talked about "freedom" in Galatians has no necessary connection with what the N.A.M., for example, means when it uses the same word.

R. M. B.

Vignettes From Little Rock*

ERNEST Q. CAMPBELL and THOMAS F. PETTIGREW

These vignettes, most of which are composites, were written in the conviction that the greatest potential influence for peaceful and constructive change in the South rests with the Protestant ministry. The relative prestige of the minister is higher in this region than in others, and in all regions the minister is uniquely qualified to tap the domain of guilt. The national stands of the major denominations regarding the Supreme Court decisions on desegregation have been unequivocal and forceful, and many Southern ministers fully accept the position of their governing bodies. It is therefore constructive and important to determine through empirical study the nature of ministerial action and response at the community level during periods of racial crisis. This is the purpose of our Little Rock study.

E.Q.C. and T.F.P.

I. STUDY IN CONSENSUS

THE REV. Hard Core Resistance was about to address his Dissident Baptist congregation from the pulpit of his simple cinder-block church. His listeners were sincere people of modest means. Many of them had migrated to Little Rock from rural Arkansas in recent years, bringing their fundamentalist faith with them. Virtually none had attended college. They worked at semi-skilled and skilled blue-collar or minor white-collar posts—clerks, mail carriers, carpenters, electricians, railroad men, service station operators.

Resistance himself had gone directly from a rural high school to the local Dissident Baptist seminary (not recognized by the Southern Baptist Convention). Granted a Doctor of Biblical Literature degree from this unaccredited school, he now instructs in homiletics at the seminary in addition to his pastoral duties.

It was the fateful fall of 1957. And he gave his congregation the same interpretation of the city's crisis that he had given the press and the local Citizens' Council at other times:

"My friends, right now I could go back to my home county in southern Arkansas and the nigras there would greet me as a friend. I am their friend; I have no animosity toward them and I have their best interests at heart. Anyone who says I hate them is a liar.

"The nigras know I have their best interests at heart. They don't want this integration any more than I do. This fellow who preaches over here at the nigra Baptist church—I give him Bible lessons—he told me he bet you couldn't find a handful of nigras that want to go where they aren't wanted. It's just a few of them that belong to this National Association for the Agitation of Colored People that's causing all the trouble.

"There are a lot of preachers in these uptown churches, my friends, who've been telling us that God is an integrationist. The trouble with those fellows is that they just aren't good Bible students. Matter of fact, I've never known an integrationist who was a good, sound student of the Bible. All they learn is a watered-down modernistic version of the Bible. Even so, I notice not a single one of them has any nigras coming to his church. It does look to me like they ought to integrate their churches if they want to go around telling us to put the nigras in our schools.

"Then, too, those uptown preachers get their money from the swanky people up on the Heights, and those folks up there are lukewarm about integration at best. 'Course they got no cause to worry. They've got their brand new high school, just opened last fall, Hall High School it is, and not a nigra in sight 'cept for sweeping the floors. It's us common people who're told to send our kids to school with colored kids at Central High. Those swanky folks on the Heights are the most prejudiced of all, because they're prejudiced against white folks like us as well as against the colored folks.

Watch Those Modernists!

"Well, I'll just tell you, we Dissident Baptists don't have any truck with those Modernist preachers. Those fellows don't believe in the virgin birth, the rising of Christ, or the inspiration of the Scriptures, which are without errors, contradictions or mistakes. Nothing in common with 'em! I wouldn't touch their interracial ministerial as-

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* These vignettes are based on extensive research, including personal interviews, in Little Rock last October and November. The research was carried out under the auspices of the Laboratory of Social Relations of Harvard University. They will appear in *Christians in Racial Crisis: A Study of Little Rock Ministers*, which will probably be published next spring.

sociation with a ten-foot pole. That outfit is made up of a lot of strange birds, speckled birds, all kinds of birds. Some of my brethren didn't see the light until they integrated with the nigras two years ago; then they got out. Myself, I knew what they were like from the beginning so I never joined 'em.

"What those Modernists do, they take little fragments of the Bible and quote parts of these fragments to make it look like God believes in integration. Take their favorite one, 'And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth'—that's Acts 17:26, my friends, and that's all *they* read—but it's *not* all the verse. The rest of it, the part they don't read, says, 'and hath determined the times before appointed, *and the bounds of their habitation.*' Now I ask you, my friends, can a man claim to be true to the Bible when he quotes just the part of a verse that suits his own purposes?

"Now the truth of the matter is that there was no reason for God making separate races if he didn't intend them to stay separate. He made us different and he didn't have to. Once, as the Scriptures tell us in Genesis 11:1, the whole earth was of one language and one speech. But man sinned, and God saw fit to confound their languages. And once the earth was all one body, but God saw fit to send the flood and divide the earth into continents separated by water so as to keep the races separate. Now I'll admit it's not the nigra's fault he's in this country. It was the white man who brought him from Africa. But it was the British who started it, not us.

"Now the nigra has a soul to be saved, same as you. Nevertheless, he is descended from Canaan and the Lord put a curse on Canaan as we are told in Genesis 9:25. Don't ask me why God cursed Canaan for the sin of his father. I don't profess to understand, but we know that it happened and that God figured it was better for people to exist at different levels rather than for us all to be at the same level.

"So you see these Modernists dress up paganism with a thin, a mighty thin, veneer of religion. They ought to stick close to the Bible, preach the gospel, instead of talking about social issues and politics. They are mixed up in a Communist-inspired plot; now mind you, I'm not saying they're Communist themselves, just mixed up in a Communist plot. They talk about one world, one blood, one church. This is evil, because to say it's better to have one race, one language, is to question the will of God who arranged things differently.

"The Lord Smiles on Segregation"

"And another thing, most folks say there are three religions: Protestant, Catholic, Jew. There really are four, because we Baptists are not Protestants. These modern Protestants break bread with Jews, who don't believe in the virgin birth, and they pray with Catholics who can't even pray to Christ. Dissident Baptists like us don't go for that sort of thing.

Now they've gotten together with the Catholics and Jews to try to promote integration under the veneer of a prayer service. They're trying to make out all the preachers in Little Rock are with them on this. But like I told you three years ago, the Supreme Court has made an illegal decision, reasoning from at least five books written by Communists and near-Communists, sociologists and psychologists, and a Socialist Swede named Myrdal, instead of from the law. I, for one, am having no part of this prayer service. They'll do a lot of talking about the fatherhood of God. Well, I tell you God is not the Father of all men; some men are the sons of the devil. And they'll do a lot of talking about "equality." Well, just look at the President himself. He made some statements that there were no second-class citizens in this country. Now you know that's foolish, him with all that military rank of his—general and everything—don't tell me he wouldn't pull his rank on a buck private.

"Now, in closing, I want to give you some advice. People who walk down the streets in Little Rock, or stop to look in a store window, are liable to be called a mob these days and arrested. So be careful. There are FBI agents all over the city, and Army helicopters swoop down on innocent bystanders. I'm against violence as much as the next man. No matter how provoked you are, don't retaliate; turn the other cheek. Right will win; the South will not stand for integration. The white man is the best friend the nigra ever had; we are all creatures of the Lord. Why, here in Little Rock the nigras have a fine new high school, the finest money can buy, and who gave it to them? The conclusion, my friends, is that the Lord smiles on segregation."

Resistance's congregation felt reassured, convinced, secure. Many stopped to thank him for making things so clear to them. Their enthusiastic response, high morale, and generous contributions indicated their support for his position on race. His congregation was with him; his ministerial associates were with him; his conscience was with him. God, he was convinced, saw things his way. He had a sense of mission. He had no worries.

II. A STUDY IN CONFLICT

THE SERVICES at Centenary Protestant Church began routinely enough on that September Sunday morning. Attendance was off a little, and in the small congregation this was a noticeable matter. The opening hymn had been sung when an usher came down the aisle and, in obvious agitation, called the minister aside. For the moment, worshippers did not know what had happened.

Outside, in the vestibule, a well-dressed Negro couple stood, expecting to participate in the church service as invited guests. The usher had detained them while he conferred with the minister. While this conference took place, the leading layman of the church went into the vestibule and exchanged pleasantries with them.

The harried usher reported to the minister that the Negroes were in the vestibule and that they expected to join the congregation in the morning worship. But Negroes had never before attended services here. And furthermore, the Negroes claimed to have been invited. The pastor's wife, they said—at least a woman who *said* she was his wife—had called their minister the previous afternoon to ask him to send representatives of his church “as a gesture in racial good will.” Centenary members would return the visit on a later Sunday, the caller had explained. What, pleaded the usher, was he to do with the visitors?

Mr. Troubled, the minister, advised his usher to tell them that there must be some mistake, that no authorized person had made such a phone call and that no plan for an exchange of visits had even been discussed by the members of his church. He further advised him to tell the Negro that his church had taken no official stand on integration and that until such time as it does, perhaps it would be better if they went somewhere else to worship. This message was relayed to the visitors. The lay leader accompanied them to their car. As they prepared to leave, a car drove up containing several other Negroes who also were responding to the “invitation.” These Negroes departed without getting out of their car.

The usher later reported to the congregation that the visitors were extremely polite and very understanding. They realized, he said, that a trick had been played.

Thus it came to pass that one of the 15 Little Rock ministers to issue a proclamation condemning the Governor of Arkansas for turning away Negro students from Little Rock's Central High School himself turned away, less than three weeks later, five Negro adults who came to worship in

his church. And this minister has in his desk a small clipping from an out-of-state newspaper that upsets and confuses him. The dispatch concludes a description of the incident with these words: “*Perhaps these Negroes mistook this church for the house of God.*”

The people who perpetrated this hoax had chosen their target well. The church to which they “invited” these Negroes is surrounded by small churches representing a variety of fundamentalist sects, with which it is in active competition for member loyalties. The homes in its neighborhood are small and of frame construction. The church building itself is in need of a coat of paint and of other improvements. Centenary is the only church of a major denomination that makes a concerted effort to attract the people of the area. There are almost no professional people in the church; members are mainly blue-collar, though some are in minor clerical posts. Of all the churches whose ministers publicly protested Governor Faubus' interference with educational integration, this one is the smallest and the least affluent. It is, in other words, the most vulnerable. Members already were making known their distrust of the minister's racial postures, and attendance was off. The hoaxers knew what they were up to.

The incident placed the minister in serious conflict. After turning the Negroes away, he explained extemporaneously to his congregation that there was really no reason why they should come unless to cause embarrassment or as the result of a trick. Yet, he told his church, we must remember that we are *all* children of God and because we are children of God we are *all* brothers. He concluded his remarks with the exhortation: “We'd better be mighty careful how we push God's children around.”

"My Spirit Is Not Satisfied"

On the one hand, his immediate superior later assured him that he did the right thing. Indeed, everyone he has talked with agrees it was the right thing to do. Members of his congregation, who were known to disapprove of the long-range trend of their national church in support of racial integration, expressed their approval—although some continued to believe Mrs. Troubled really did issue that invitation to the Negroes.

On the other hand, later in the fall, Troubled attended a national conference of his church as an official representative from his area. He talked, dined and worshipped with Negroes at the conference. Everyone there, it appeared to him, was in favor of integration of the churches and vocally

critical of segregation. What these people think, representing his church as they do, is important to him.

He is a Southerner as well as a minister—a product of the Southern culture, and of its rural areas at that. He has an emotional commitment to segregation—"To tell the honest truth, I'd rather things stay the way they are. I'd rather have segregation."—that he cannot intellectually justify. As a minister he believes, as he told his congregation, that God is no segregationist, and that you have to twist the Bible to find anything in it that supports segregation. He is caught in the middle between pressure from his local congregation and the important relation he has to his national church body. Actions that are prompted by his identification with his church at the national level alienate him from his local congregation, thus reducing his influence and interfering with his pastoral work. Yet this identification is strong enough that silence and inaction frustrate him.

"My spirit is not satisfied," Troubled admits sadly. "I just know that Jesus never would have turned anybody away if he had been in my pulpit."

III. A STUDY IN COMPROMISE

MR. POWER is a cordial and impressive man in his fifties, born and educated in Arkansas. His able leadership of the large and affluent First Metropolis Protestant Church for over a decade makes him one of the most influential ministers in Little Rock. In addition to his persuasive sermons, Power administers a major enterprise with considerable skill. Indeed, there is the atmosphere of the major executive about his handsomely appointed offices. The flurry of secretarial activity in the church office, the countless meetings day and night of committees and organizations in various parts of the plant, even the Chamber of Commerce plaque above his desk—these suggest the operation of a vast business firm.

Sincere, direct and candid, he knew the visitor would be primarily interested in the racial crisis and he came right to the point. Yes, he believes the nine Negro children had every right to attend Central High School and he wanted to see them kept there. No, he would not go so far as to call himself an integrationist.

"Gradualism describes my position best, sir. All of the truly responsible leaders in Little Rock, both Negro and white, are gradualists too. But one of the horrors of this terrible situation, I tell you, is that the good terms 'moderate' and 'gradualist' have become despised epithets hurled at you

by segregation extremists as if you were some sort of Communist traitor.

Christian Love and Irrational Fears

"This thing, you know, didn't have to happen. Our deplorable Governor can be blamed for most of the trouble, I suppose, but Eisenhower didn't help either by announcing last summer that he couldn't foresee any circumstances that would lead him to call out the troops. It comes down to the plain fact that we just didn't receive any real leadership of any kind from anywhere.

"I see you smiling, sir, and I know what you are thinking. All of you social scientists are the same. You are wondering what Christian leadership has been offered in all of this mess. In my opinion, most of Little Rock's ministers have been most courageous, everything considered. Most of us had given sermons before the trouble. I gave a pretty direct talk once or twice myself, but I'm not sure they had much of an effect. Raised a few segregation backs in the congregation, at least. And now I'm widely known as opposing segregation in principle.

"I'm proud of the people in my congregation, too. Not a member of my church was in that awful mob at Central High School. They wouldn't think of doing a thing like that. They believe in law and in orderly processes for settling differences.

"Well sir, when all this trouble started this fall, you just can't imagine how explosive the whole thing became. I signed that ministerial protest against Faubus calling out the Guard, but I can't see that our announcement did any good at all. It looks like people have got into the habit of respecting religion but not listening to it. After that, it seemed obvious to me, sir, that this wasn't going to do anything to help the situation. I did say something on a radio program about these addle-brained segregationist outfits we've got around here, and it started an awful ruckus around here in my church.

"I can't impress on you enough how strongly some of my people believe in segregation. They have Christian love in their hearts for the Negro, but they have a lot of irrational fears about desegregation. Like I said, I got into a little trouble myself—all passed over now, I saw to that—but I've heard that some of the most outspoken ministers are in terrible difficulty. It takes a lot of plain old-fashioned fortitude to do what they've done, but they've paid a stiff price. Membership off, pledges off, attendance off; driving people away is no way to build a church.

"We just don't have that sort of thing here at First Metropolis. One of my board members was in here talking with me just this morning. He told me that members appreciate my not letting this thing get out of hand. They know how I feel about this business and how I think they ought to feel, he told me, and that's enough. He believes that our church has everything to lose and nothing to gain by getting all involved in a big controversy, and more and more, I agree with him. We've been having a big Every-Member-Canvas-and-Fund-Raising campaign, you know—that's what he came in to see me about—and he says that some of the people want to sit tight on their pocket-books, what with all the fuss going on. But when he tells them that I'm not going to let things get out of hand, they pledge their tithes just like they're supposed to.

"So I haven't talked about race directly since all the fuss began. Debate just wasn't going to help. Good Christians can believe in either segregation or integration. Obviously, the first step, sir, was to get all the Christians in the community to return to God. And this is what we tried to do with our city-wide prayers for peace. Reconciliation—that's what we needed. The theme we needed is right here: St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians, fifth chapter, 18th and 19th verses. 'And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.' That's it, reconciliation. A powerful Christian term it is, too. The newspapermen misunderstood it, I'm afraid. Because we didn't have the prayers support either side, or condemn anybody, the press thought reconciliation meant neutral and compromising. They simply missed the point.

"Be Firm, But Don't Stick Your Neck Out"

"I think those prayers were the best thing we could have done. We brought everyone back to religion. We didn't get all enmeshed in argument and emotion. We just prayed for God's guidance, and I think that alone helped things considerably. Now, except for a few, our ministers are returning to the quiet, steady work that in the end does the most good. The Church has been the Church, and we have preserved it as such.

"Now, when you consider, sir, what little influence religion has on people today, I think you

have to admit that this city's clergy has done about all it could. Most of us are known to be in favor of gradual integration, but we've managed to go on with the work of the Church. And the Columbus Day prayers made our citizens remember that religious considerations must contribute to a solution to the problem.

"And I hope I've told you what you wanted to know, sir. I can sum it all up for you the same way I did for two young pastors who came to me for advice about all this trouble. My policy, I told them, is to be firm, but don't stick your neck out. This thing has not disturbed the program of my church and it's not going to."

IV. A STUDY IN CAUTION

MR. STRATEGY, pastor of Proud Protestant Church, had a standing agreement with his ushers that any Negroes who attended Sunday services in his church would be seated and shown all courtesies. In the fall of 1957 several of his ushers came to tell him they could not sit with Negroes nor willingly usher them into the church. Suave, sincere, refreshing Mr. Strategy gave a characteristic answer: "That's all right, I understand. Just find someone to take over your ushering duties until you feel you can return. Our policy will continue unchanged." (The ushers themselves had set the policy, under provocation by the minister. No Negroes have come.)

Mr. Strategy is a pastor in one of Little Rock's most popular denominations, and his own church has a particularly proud heritage. From its membership has come a striking number of public servants in high office, of whom the members are justly proud. Some of its laymen have been effective leaders in church work at state and national levels. They have also pioneered in establishing cooperative lay activity across denominational lines. There is also quiet pride in that Proud Church fuses into a coordinated unit a large membership that ranges from the city's wealthiest citizens to those for whom the church extends support. Although it is among the elite of churches in the community, it is amazingly and refreshingly free from snobbery.

In the early days after nine Negro students entered Central High School, students from Proud Church took the lead in befriending them. For example, they invited Negroes to dine with them in the school cafeteria. They became objects of pressure from segregationists and their overtures

of friendliness stopped. Mr. Strategy tried through small groups, seminars, and personal contacts to maintain these friendly gestures; he also asked his youth workers to do likewise. He failed, but he tried.

Like only a small number of his ministerial colleagues, Strategy did not mince words when he dealt with the approaching integration at Central High School from his pulpit shortly before school opened. He told his congregation that the Christian faith demanded more of them than that they acquiesce in a social pattern that heaps indignities on Negro citizens. He invited his listeners to try placing themselves in the position of those who are the victims of discrimination. He exploded what he termed "myths" that some people used to defend their bigotry. He gave unqualified praise to the gradual integration plan of the local school board, and he presented evidence from the New Testament to show that integration is the only defensible position for a Christian.

At the conclusion of the service, an elderly personal friend and member of his congregation for many years told him at the church door, "Preacher, that was a very good sermon. The only thing wrong with it is that it just ain't so." Generally though, the sermon had a "marvelous reception"—especially from the younger members.

Strategy is one of the 15 local ministers who issued a protest against Governor Faubus' action only a few hours after the Governor had called out the National Guard. He feels strongly that the Governor followed a lawless course of action against the best interests of the community and the state.

And yet, Strategy has not discussed the community's race problem from his pulpit since that eventful day the National Guard turned away Negro students seeking to enter Central High. Nor has he issued statements to or through the press. Nor is he publicly perceived by either whites or Negroes as an active or effective pro-integration minister. Nor has he publicly proposed ameliorative action, commented on the arrival of Federal troops, condemned intimidation in the high school; challenged his members to seek constructive solutions within a desegregated framework, nor taken any of the other actions some think he might have taken to express the revulsion he felt at the turn of events after school opened. Many people think the failure to peacefully integrate the high school means little to him. Liberals in the community feel he has let them down.

Frightened? Hardly. Segregationist? Impossible. Shy? Not at all.

A Rational Philosophy of the Ministry

Actually his cautious behavior expresses a rational philosophy of the ministry. As a matter of simple tactics and techniques, Strategy believes it is unwise to make pronouncements in the heat of temper. He believes that hasty actions and angry words can all too easily alienate those you want to influence. Actions and pronouncements during the heat of tension must be considered against a long range program. They can easily do more harm than good. If a minister has done his work well in the months and years of calm, his members will not require a special tempo on his part to know their religious obligations during crisis. He further feels that a minister's primary responsibility is to his members rather than to the community. The pastor must keep an "upper tension" on his flock as they grow in religious stature and social awareness, but he should not expect sudden and dramatic transformations. There is a long road ahead.

An efficient and persuasive person, a minister beloved by his people, Strategy has accumulated a significant amount of respect, prestige and affection in the community as in his congregation. He used very little of it last fall. In a city whose liberals were disheartened and unassured, when certain ministerial voices said loudly that God is a segregationist and went without effective rebuttal, Strategy might have rallied an efficient body of citizens to assert liberal convictions based on moral imperatives. The history of Little Rock, 1957-58 would have been different had this happened. He is, perhaps, better qualified than any other local minister for such an effort. Yet he did not do it. Not from fear of losing his job, nor fear of criticism, nor for distaste for the effort itself. Not because he is illiberal, but because he believes that his influence must be preserved until it can be employed with maximum impact.

Strategy has excellent contacts with public leaders, in both the city and the state, whose behavior during the crisis he regards as contrary to the Christian imperative. Regarding these leaders he says: "They need help and I can help them. I intend to help Governor Faubus and others like him. When the time comes, I will, but I wouldn't be able to help them if I had said things that alienate them from me and made it impossible for me to get them to listen. It is clear that with such people his philosophy stands to receive its acid test.

V. A STUDY IN COURAGE

A MENACING CROWD surrounded Little Rock's Central High as the first week of school began. When the Negro students approached the school for the first time, Mr. Action was on hand. In fact, he led the small group of white and Negro adults who faced the crowd with the children.

Later, an exasperated parishoner and personal friend asked him, "Did you have to do it, Robert?"

The question begged the answer. Yes, Action "had to do it," as he had to do everything else that he believed might bring about effective educational integration in his city. For he, like very few others in Little Rock, publicly supported integration and did everything in his power to achieve its peaceful acceptance. A sympathetic family grew concerned, and many of his closest ministerial friends let him go it alone.

"Voice from the Old South"

Mr. Action, to the consternation and unbelief of his many detractors, truly fits the "voice from the old South" description given him by a local newspaper. Descendant of the Confederate dead and of slaveholders, born and raised in a Deep South state, servant of the South's people for many years, he has a fervent love for his region and its people. For his racial views he has suffered the abuse of his homeland, and he speaks feelingly of how his efforts in the cause of racial justice disassociate him from a tradition and a people he loves. He does not fully understand the vigor of their caustic remarks, and their remarks are the more caustic because he was one of their own.

It is no accident that Action was president of the biracial Greater Little Rock Ministerial Association when the crisis broke. For he does not stand alone among his ministerial peers in believing that a segregated society cannot secure racial justice and equality. Many colleagues agree with him. But unlike most of his integrationist colleagues, Action was neither cautious nor compromising in his approach to Little Rock's crisis. As the tense September of 1957 began, he issued an official appeal to all members of the ministerial association to urge their congregations to peacefully comply with the Federal Court orders. When Faubus suddenly flung his soldiers around Central High School to maintain segregation, Action helped to initiate at once a denouncement of this maneuver by 15 prominent local ministers. And after Negro leaders requested his aid, he gathered up the small band of ministers who escorted the Negro chil-

dren on their first attempt to enter the school. This done, he aided in organizing and moderated a state-wide, interdenominational meeting of ministers which released a religious proclamation concerning the crisis.

When the violence burst forth in late September, he requested, as the ministerial association's executive head, forthright measures from the mayor and the chief of police. The following day, President Eisenhower sent Army paratroopers into the city, and Action publicly praised the move. He was virtually the only local leader to do so. And, unlike many Little Rockians, he was concerned about the conflict's international implications. Thus, he tape-recorded a short talk for the Voice of America, which was translated into 12 languages, including Russian.

His public activity did not keep him from dealing with the community's racial problems in his own pulpit. Action was one of the very few clergymen in the city to preach repeated sermons explicitly supporting integration as a Christian imperative.

In October, Action joined with other religious leaders to organize the city-wide prayers for peace. After these prayers, most of the ministerial participants ceased their integrationist activity completely. But Action continued unabated. He became the local chairman of the Goodwill Scholarship Fund, a trust set up "to reward youth of Little Rock Central High showing a belief in fair play." He helped organize and later headed a small group of white and Negro leaders which meets each week in an effort to maintain at least one open channel of communication between the races.

At the invitation of various church organizations, Action has flown to distant parts of the nation to describe in detail the difficulties of his community. And he has continued to make local pronouncements—criticizing a "voluntary segregation" plan or praising Negroes for their non-violence—that receive wide community attention. In June of 1958, when Ernest Green became the first Negro graduate of Central High, Action and Dr. Martin Luther King sat with the Green family throughout the tense troop-guarded ceremony.

"Judas Betrayed a Man . . ."

In short, Action has done everything that he could think of doing to support racial integration in Little Rock. But he has constantly faced stern opposition. Pressures, some subtle, some blatant, have been applied to him, but to little avail. Those

(Continued on page 136.)



Saint Hereticus

Beware of Barth

I'd better tip my hand in advance. I'm worried about Barth. It may be, of course, that in the end he will turn out to be the grandest heretic of them all. But who can tell yet? The system isn't completed. In the meantime, how-

It is undeniably and indeed unequivocally a question whereof first of all basically and as such, as a proper and indeed a very necessary *prius* for all further investigation, without regard for any self-surrounding limitations and wholly apart from the usual perfunctory concessions offered to the so-called and self-consciously styled neo-Protestant school, we take it in hand as our major and only concern—leaving until a later time (cf. C.D. VI. 5, para 387) which will be more proper and fitting as such for the purposes of our investigation to deal with possible objections—to assert in the most undeniable fashion that we have to do here and finally everywhere and therefore at no other point whatsoever with the one significant action in itself and as such of the one *Deus* in and of Himself as He is. At the self-same moment and in the same breath as we make this assertion we must assert with all possible emphasis and vigor a corollary, a second fact, which by its very nature is not in itself a second fact as such at all, but by very nature of being a “fact” at all is indeed finally and without possibility of compromise a first fact as well, and a first fact which by virtue of its “secondness” is in truth both before and after that which it precedes and follows, to the effect (a matter to which utmost concern must be given at the proper place) that the one significant action in itself and as such of the one *Deus* in and of Himself as He is by token of that very fact that it is such and such an act of such and such a *Deus*, not fully understood as the one significant action in itself and as such of the one *Deus* in and of Himself as He is, but similarly and essentially and without the remotest possibility of distinction apart from refusing to take with any remaining seriousness the discipline of exegesis, also in the very same breath the wholly insignificant action apart from itself of man in the fullness of his separation from the three-fold unitary *Deus* from whom in truth he cannot be separated but is now separated at precisely the point of his final reunion which has never indeed from the creation of the world been anything but an assured fact beyond the possibility of man to grasp for himself in himself and with himself intrinsically and as such.

G. Adolphus, Schrenk, the elder Umlaut, W. Pauck and A. Stevenson, all err in their various ways (for what follows see *Th. Ex. H.*, VIII, 19) in failing to take with full seriousness the implications of this basic and irrevocable distinction. Their failure to do so, proceeding from what may seem to have been desirable and even necessary reasons at the time, is in large part and almost without significant exception in itself and as such responsible for the fact that theology is where it is today, that theology is where it is today, and that theology is where it is today. (We will develop this threefold distinction, which is the key to a true understanding of the strange movements of thought which circulate today under the name of “contemporaneous theology,” as a part of our discussion of the anthropological considerations which underlie our refusal to take anthropological considerations with any full and final seriousness in and of themselves and as such.) *Credent quia non absurdum est!* Herein lies the possibility and the necessity for the true understanding of where the 19th century was unconsciously leading itself by failing to assume significant responsibility for any major direction of even a minor sort.

Let us now concern ourselves with an elaboration of each of these two basic points in turn, beginning with the corollary and postponing for the time being a full treatment of the *prius*.

ever, he is certainly out to nail the rest of the heretics, and at this point I have a vested interest. Tit for tat, I say.

And since I doubt that I can refute Barth on the basis of his theological adequacy or inadequacy, I must trade punches with him under the table and attack him at the one point of obvious and almost total vulnerability—his verbosity. If potential American readers can be scared away from Barth on grounds of the difficulties of his style, then nobody will be forced to refute him, or support him, or take him seriously one way or the other. This will mean that those of us on the fringes of the faith can continue our life unhampered by real challenge.

Here, then, is my version of what can be found on almost any of the 3,800 pages of *Church Dogmatics* now in English.

Vignettes (Continued from page 134.)

closest to him grow tense in concern for his safety. Relatives in other states have expressed their displeasure at his views. He has been told that some he loves "deeply regret" the position he has taken. Some members of the ministerial association have said that Action is a publicity seeker. And letters to the editors of the local papers select him out as their favorite target for abuse.

More important, perhaps, are the pressures from his own congregation. Financial pledges and attendance at Downtown Protestant Church declined sharply. One faithful member expressed her displeasure and then said defiantly: "No preacher is going to run me off from my church." Laymen asked him to please preach "just a spiritual sermon," and others admonished him that the church should not engage in controversial issues. A financial stalwart complained that Action's racial activities "take time away from the work he's supposed to be doing" and added tellingly: "This is not exactly what his congregation pays him for."

This opposition from the congregation is stern and serious. It might be even worse were it not for Action's warmth, charm and refusal to become provoked at his detractors. Many of his parishoners, even older ones who almost to a man favor

Erratum

In the sentence, "But theological integration between Protestantism and Catholicism in this country has not really begun" ("A Protestant View of Roman Catholic Power-II," Sept. 15, page 121, column one, third paragraph), the word "integration" should be changed to "interaction."

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segregation, remain loyal to him. "I just can't go along with you," blurted out an elderly woman member one Sunday morning following a sermon on integration, "but I certainly think you are a sincere man, and I love you, Mr. Action."

There probably are but few ministers in Little Rock's major denominations who have not felt at least an occasional twinge of conscience when they compare their own cautious ineptness to the risks and abuse Action has endured. For he is the voice of conscience for his colleagues no less than the city itself. And perhaps, as so often happens, he has found that it requires more courage at such a time to face one's friends than to face one's enemies.

The blow that hurt the most came in a letter from a close boyhood friend in the Deep South. Having read of Action's activities in the Little Rock crisis, he chided his friend bitterly: "Judas betrayed a Man, Benedict Arnold betrayed a nation, and you, my friend, have betrayed a race!"

Characteristically, there was a plaintive quality, an element of true pathos, in the calm answer Action gave his friend: "I have full respect for your sincerity and integrity and hope that at some time in the future we may renew the ties which were so strong between your family and mine in days gone by.... May God's richest blessing rest on you now and always." But there are some things he cannot have, and he has made his choice.

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